Social Impacts of Overpopulation

There are some major reasons as to why it matters that the population be regulated. Here are just a few:

1. The increasing difficulty to supply clean water to humans. Water tables worldwide are dropping in large part due to humans.

2. The oceans are over fished and coral reefs, havens for tons of underwater species, are dying.

3. Pollution in cities are clouding the atmosphere and contributing to respiratory diseases. Cities are growing at alarming rates.

4. Over 800 million people worldwide are currently malnourished, and that number is still growing, as farm lands disappear from soil erosion.

5. Wild environments, such as the rainforests, that protect endangered plants and animals are being removed to make way for urban developments.

6. People relocate due to rapid population growth.

7. Diseases spread much easier in crowded areas.

8. Technological advancements, such as the Industrial Revolution, are changing the Earth's atmosphere, affecting the climate.

There are many more reasons, but the list could literally extend to almost every aspect of our lives. So, overpopulation is clearly a large issue, but how can it be remedied? There are quite a few ways this can be done. Some are controversial, while some aren't. They will be discussed in greater detail below.

Conservation of land is a good start. This manages to prevent the land from being ravaged for it's resources. Correlating to this solution is recycling. Using the same materials over again reduces the necessity to employ more raw materials. Pollution regulations are that reduce the amount of harmful toxins into the air are also aiding the environment. These are solutions to the availability of resources. Many underdeveloped countries do not involve any of these solutions within the governed society, however. For this reason, a major goal of advocates that support these ideas is education. This is achieved by raising awareness of the problem, either through organizations, literature, or conferences.

There are some general and simple solutions to overpopulation. As discussed earlier, when the birth rate is higher than the death rate, sustainability starts to become compromised. Given the abilities and technologies within the field of health, at least within the United States, the death rate is not likely to drop, unless affected by an epidemic or deadly disease, such as the recent SARS events. So, the solution lies within reducing the birth rate. Unwanted pregnancies and the lack of contraceptives in certain countries make up a large part of the continuing population growth. By educating people about family planning and increasing the availability of contraception and sterilization, a drop in birth rates can be achieved.

Population momentum, which is the tendency for population growth to continue beyond the rate required to fill in the dying population due to a high number of individuals in the childbearing age, is also a significant problem. Baby Boomer children are just now reaching the age to have children. Between the ages of 15 and 24 is when most women become sexually active, marry, and have their first child. In many cases, this is not the choice of the woman involved. Studies estimate that delaying pregnancy by two to five years can minimize population momentum and reduce the global total. By spacing out multiple children, as well as raising the age of the mother for the first birth, population momentum can be diminished by up to 40%.

Another alternative that remains a difficult topic in the United States is abortion. This continues to be a touchy subject, but it still remains a possible alternative for many would-be mothers that do not want their children. In some countries, there is a desire for large families. The reason for this is that these areas typically have high child mortality rates, and so parents choose to have many children so that some may survive. The solution here is to attempt to decrease the mortality rate, either with medical supplies, or better living arrangements.

Even laws in some countries, such as China, put a cap on how many children a couple can have. Each family in China is allowed to have two children, while another law states that individuals must be married by the age of 25.